

Is There Lead in the Drinking Water in Educational Facilities? Fall 2008



You can help reduce the risk of lead exposure from drinking water in educational facilities.

HOW DOES LEAD AFFECT CHILDREN'S HEALTH?

Lead is a health risk to infants and children. Childhood lead exposure can interfere with red blood cell chemistry and impair the development of the brain and nervous system. Adverse effects may include delays in normal physical and mental development in babies and young children as well as deficits in attention span, hearing, and learning abilities.

HOW DOES LEAD GET INTO DRINKING WATER?

As water moves through a school's plumbing system, lead can leach into the water from plumbing materials and fixtures that contain lead. The longer water remains in contact with leaded plumbing, the more opportunity exists for lead to leach into water. As a result, facilities with prolonged periods of no water usage (e.g., weekends, holidays, overnight, etc.), such as schools and day care centers, may have elevated lead concentrations in the water.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

- Flush drinking water fountains and faucets used in cooking and preparing foods for at least 30 seconds first thing in the morning and after several hours of non-use.
- Check the brand/model of your water fountain(s) against EPA's list of known brands/models with lead components.
- Develop a sampling plan and collect drinking water samples from various sources in your facility to determine if high lead levels are present.
- Submit these samples to a certified laboratory for analysis.
- Replace outlets with lead-free components, if necessary.
- Establish a schedule for periodic follow-up sampling to monitor lead levels in your facility.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit the EPA's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/OGWDW/schools/index.htm>
- Consult the 'Lead in Drinking Water Guidance Manual' available at <http://www.azdeq.gov/ceh/water.html>
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